

## **Remarks**

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

### ***Premature Office Action***

When filing the Request for Continued Examination on May 24, 2010, a request for suspension of action under 37 CFR 1.103(d) for a period of three months, which would have been until August 24, 2010. Applicant's representative had intended to present further amendments for consideration by the Examiner. An Office Action, however, was issued on July 13, 2010, which is prior to the end of the requested suspension period. Because of this premature issuance of the Office Action, the next Office action should not be made final. This hopefully is of no moment, as it is believed the application is now in condition for allowance and no further Office action should be needed other than a notice of allowance.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

Although issue is taken with the previously advance rejections for the reasons previously presented, the claims have been further amended in order to further distinguish patentably over the applied references, so as to expedite allowance of the application.

As amended, claim 1 recites a loop for pointing devices for guiding a cursor on a computer screen or the like. The term "means" has been deleted from the preamble of the claims as it is in essence superfluous.

The loop of claim 1 comprises a flexible fabric support material in the form of a cylinder having a longitudinal axis and capable of being axially moved and circumferentially rotated around two axially oriented supports that extend parallel to the longitudinal axis for stretching a cross-section of the loop to an oval shape.

The flexible fabric support material has on an internal surface thereof a number of mutually circumferentially spaced apart, axially elongated, stiffening strips or equivalent means substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis for stiffening the loop in its axial direction. As previously set forth, the stiffening strips or equivalent means each have a circumferential width, and said stiffening strips or equivalent means have an axial length greater than the collective circumferential widths of a plurality of stiffening strips or equivalent means.

As now set forth in claim 1, the flexible fabric support material has on an external surface thereof a number of mutually circumferentially spaced apart friction elements.

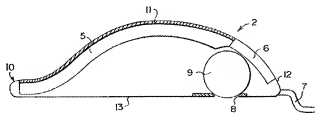
In addition, the stiffening strips are made of a relatively low friction material for low friction sliding on a support surface, and the friction elements are made of a relatively high friction material for providing high friction engagement by a user's finger.

Clearly, Oberg does not disclose or suggest a loop as now set forth in amended claim 1. More particularly, Oberg does not disclose a loop comprising a flexible fabric support material in the form of a cylinder. Oberg teaches a pair of flexible wires for interlinking the pad-like segments 56. See Oberg, column 1, lines 40-47.

Regarding the fabric limitation, the Examiner contended that it would have been obvious to replace the flexible wires with fabric in view of Crawford. For support, the Examiner refers to column 3, line 26 of Crawford which is part of the following paragraph:

U.S. Pat. No. 5,570,112 for Ergonomic Computer Mouse issued in 1996. The '112 patent teaches changing the mouse design from a hard outer housing to a soft foam rubber pad intended to support the wrist and palm of the user in comfort. The rubber pad is covered by a thin fabric material and otherwise operates as a conventional mouse.

Indeed, Crawford does mention the use of a thin fabric material, but for a purpose totally unrelated to a loop device like that disclosed in Oberg. The mouse design of the '112 patent is shown below. As can be seen, the fabric material 11 covers a pad 5 on the housing of a conventional type of mouse. The fabric is employed in a static manner rather than in a dynamic manner as in the case of the flexible wires. Moreover, there is lacking any suggestion to use the fabric material 11 as a means interlinking anything and much less pad-like segments.



Oberg and the other applied references also fail to disclose or suggest stiffening strips on an internal surface of a loop made of fabric material that are made of a relatively low friction material for low friction sliding on a support surface, and friction

elements on an external surface that are made of a relatively high friction material for providing high friction engagement by a user's finger.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the rejections should be withdrawn.

The absence in this reply of any comments on the other contentions set forth in the Office Action should not be construed to be an acquiescence therein. Rather, no comment is needed since the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons.

***Conclusion***

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

/Don W. Bulson/

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue  
Nineteenth Floor  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
M:\S\STOC\IP\0140\0140US-R05.doc